

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (Currently Amended). In a digital communication system employing forward error control and having a decision-directed tracking loop with an adaptive element, a method for selectively updating the adaptive element, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) generating an estimate of a data symbol from an output of the adaptive element;
- (b) computing an error signal from the estimate of the data symbol and the output of the adaptive element;
- (c) computing one or more decision quality indicators of estimates, detecting transmission errors over the one or more decision quality indicators of the estimates in a window, and generating a decision quality indicator dependent value wherein the window has a length that is a function of a forward error control code; and
- (d) updating the adaptive element with the error signal based on the decision quality indicator dependent value, wherein the one or more decision quality indicator[[s]] is-a are syndrome[[s]].

2. Canceled.

3 (Currently Amended). The method of claim 1, wherein
the one or more decision quality indicators ~~syndromes~~ of estimates are computed using a parity check operation; and
the transmission errors are detected by a transmission error detection operation over the syndromes contained in a the window of shift registers.

4 (Original). The method of claim 3 wherein the transmission error detection operation is an inclusive 'NOR' operation.

5 (Original). The method of claim 3 wherein the window has a length equal to one.

6. Canceled.

7 (Currently Amended). The method described in claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises the further steps of:

- (i) multiplexing the error signal with an adaptation-disabling value; and
- (ii) disabling the ~~update~~ updating step when a transmission error is detected.

8 (Original). The method of claim 7 wherein the adaptation-disabling value is a zero value.

9 (Currently Amended). The method described in claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises the further steps of:

- (i) analyzing the decision quality indicator dependent value to determine if a the transmission error[[s]] ~~has~~ have occurred; and
- (ii) rejecting a tentative update if it is determined that a the transmission error[[s]] ~~has~~ have occurred.

10 (Currently Amended). In a digital communication system employing forward error control and having a decision-directed tracking loop with an adaptive element, a method for selectively updating the adaptive element, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) generating an estimate of a data symbol from an output of the adaptive element;
- (b) computing an error signal from the estimate of the data symbol and the output of the adaptive element;
- (c) determining if one or more of the estimates of the data symbol has one or more probable errors within a window of shift registers, wherein the window has a length that is a function of a forward error control code; and

- (d) selectively disabling updates of the adaptive element with the error signal if a determination has been made that the estimate of the data symbol has a probable error within the window of shift registers.

11 (Original). The method of claim 10 wherein the adaptive element performs an equalization function.

12 (Original). The method of claim 10 wherein the adaptive element performs a timing recovery function.

13 (Original). The method of claim 10 wherein the adaptive element performs a carrier recovery function.

14 (Original). The method of claim 10 wherein the adaptive element performs an automatic gain control function.

15 (Currently Amended). In a communication system employing a forward error control code and an adaptive processor, a method for selectively updating the adaptive processor, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) calculating a decision quality indicator of an estimate wherein the estimate is obtained from an output of ~~an~~ the adaptive processor;
- (b) calculating a signal error from the estimate and the output of the adaptive processor;
- (c) determining if a sequence of the decision quality indicators within a window contains at least one transmission error representative value, wherein the size of the window is dependent on a forward error control code; and
- (d) disabling an update of the adaptive processor when a the at least one transmission error representative value is present within the window.

16 (Currently Amended). The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of:

- (e) enabling the update of the adaptive processor when the sequence of decision quality indicators within the window does not contain the at least one ~~contains no~~ transmission error representative value.

17 . Canceled.

18 (Currently Amended). The method of claim ~~17~~ 15 wherein the forward error control code is a block code and the size of the window of step (c) is set equal to the size of a block of information.

19 (Currently Amended). The method of claim ~~17~~ 15 wherein the forward error control code is a convolutional code and the size of the window of step (c) is set equal to the constraint length of the convolutional code.

20 (Currently Amended). The method of claim ~~17~~ 15 wherein the adaptive processor is based on a block update with a certain rate and wherein the size of the window is set proportional to the block update with the certain rate.

21 (Currently Amended). An apparatus for selectively updating an adaptive element of a communication system, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) a quantizer for generating an estimate of a symbol from an output of the adaptive element;
- (b) an error calculator for computing a difference between the output of the adaptive element and the estimate;
- (c) a decision quality estimator for computing one or more decision quality indicators of estimates within a window and generating a decision quality indicator dependent value, wherein the window has a length that is a function of a forward error control code; and
- (d) an adaptation controller for controlling the updating of the adaptive element based on the decision quality indicator dependent value.

22 (Original). The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the adaptive element is an adaptive equalizer.

23 (Original). The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the adaptive element is a carrier recovery circuit.

24 (Original). The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the adaptive element is a timing recovery circuit.

25 (Original). The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the adaptive element is an automatic gain control circuit.

26 (Original). The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the decision quality estimator is a syndrome calculator.

27 (Original). The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the syndrome calculator comprises:

- (i) a parity check calculator; and
- (ii) an enable generator containing a window of shift-registers, the enable generator having an output based on a NOR operation performed over the contents of the window of shift-registers.

28 (Previously Amended). The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the adaptation controller is configured to multiplex an error signal with an adaptation-disabling value, the adaptation controller having an output based on an output of the decision quality estimator.

29 (Currently Amended). An apparatus for selectively updating an adaptive element of a communication system, the apparatus comprising:

- (a) an estimation circuit for generating an estimate of a symbol from an output of the adaptive element;
- (b) an error calculating circuit for computing a difference between the output of the adaptive element and the estimate;

- (c) a transmission error estimation circuit for identifying probable errors in a sequence of decision quality indicators within a window, wherein the window has a length that is a function of a forward error control code; and
- (d) an adaptation controller for controlling the updating of the adaptive element based on the identification of the probable errors in the ~~symbol~~ sequence of decision quality indicators.

30 (Original). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the adaptive element is an adaptive equalizer.

31 (Original). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the adaptive element is a carrier recovery circuit.

32 (Original). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the adaptive element is an automatic gain control circuit.